

W E I G H T Y
C A S E S
O F

Conscience

TAKEN FROM

Mr. A. B U R G E S S,

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For the great Benefit and Advantage
of all Serious CHRISTIANS.

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Some Useful

PRACTICAL CASES

Collected out of *A. Burges's*.

CASE I.

What Practical Advantage may a Christian have from the Knowledge of Original Sin?

I shall answer it in these following Particulars:

1. **T**HE Knowledge of this Original Corruption, leadeth us to that great Duty so much inculcated both by Scripture and Heathens, to wit, Of knowing our selves. Yea, that important Duty can never be performed without a firm belief of our natural Pollution; and till we come to acknowledge with *Jeremy*, ch. 17. *The Heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?* Our actual Impieties, tho never so gross and numerous, do not demonstrate our Loathsomeness so much as this bitter and sour Leaven within. These are the Stream, but that is the Fountain; the strength of our wickedness lyeth in a defiled Nature, as in a

Toad or Serpent, the Venom it sends forth at any time, is nothing to that Poyson which is in its Nature.

2. *Where there is a true Knowledge of this, there will be a sound and thorough Humiliation and Repentance:* And we shall never be sufficiently humbled for our actual Transgressions, if we are not convinced of this. And hence, those that are heartily sorry for their Sins, never rest in the confession of actual Enormities, but proceed always to the Fountain from whence they spring, as we see in that of David, Psal. 51. *Behold, I was formed in Iniquity;* whereas, the wicked humble themselves only for some gross actual Sins, as we see in *Abab*.

3. *Ignorance of Original Sin makes us mistake in the crucifying and mortifying of Sin.* No Man can truly leave a Sin, unless he in some measure conquer it in its Original and Root: And this is a sure Difference between a Regenerate and Unregenerate Man about forsaking of Sin: They may both give over wonted actual Impieties; they may both escape the *Pollution of the World thro the Knowledge of the Gospel*: But the one leaveth only the Acts of Sin, the other mortifies it gradually, tho not totally, in the Cause and Inclination of the Soul. Thus *Paul*, tho he complain'd of the actual Stirrings of Sin, yet could truly say, *I delight in the Law of God in the inner Man*, Rom. 7. which no Unregenerate Person can say; for though he be outwardly clean, yet he has still a swinish Nature within; tho there be a Skin drawn over the Wound, the Putrefaction is as much inwardly as it was before; *Samson's* Hair is only cut, but not pluck'd out by the Root.

4. *Ignorance*

4. *Ignorance of this Causes gross mistakes about Conversion and Regeneration*; as we see in *Nicodemus*, John 3.6. He mistook grossly about the New Birth; and the reason of it appears from our Saviours words, *Whosoever is born of the Flesh is Flesh*; importing, that if *Nicodemus* had known, that by natural Generation he was nothing but Flesh, that is, Sin and Evil, his Soul, Mind, Conscience, all Flesh in this sense, as well as his Body, he would quickly have seen his necessity of being born again.

5. *Upon the Knowledge of Original Sin, we evidently see our Impossibility to keep the Law of God*. For, whereas the Law requires an intense Love of God, and forbids all kind of Lust and sinful Concupiscence even in the very first motions of it; we, being wholly dead in sin, comparing the Law with our Condition, cannot but conclude that we fail in all things; that the Law is spiritual, but we carnal: And those Opinions that diminish Original Sin, do also plead for a possibility of keeping Gods Commandments. And most of our common People flatter themselves in this, and are ready to say with the Young Man, *All these have I kept from my youth up*. But a true sense of this natural Defilement, would make us judge quite otherwise.

6. *By the right Knowledge of this, we come to be acquainted with that Combat and Conflict that is between the Flesh and the Spirit*: According to that, Rom. 7. the Apostle Paul speaks of all the Godly as thus exercised, *The Flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the Flesh*; so that whatever is done holily, is always attended with opposition from the Flesh; and therefore Grace is the mortifying of

the Flesh: And our Sins will not be put to death without violence offered to the Flesh. Therefore every godly Man hath a Combat within him, which puts him often into such Agonies; whereas one in a State of Nature feels not the least struggling, but is in quiet and ease, because he is wholly in Original Sin.

7. *The true Knowledge of our Original Defilement, brings our Souls humbled and burdened under it, to a true and real esteem of Christ and his Grace.* So much as we take off from Original Sin, so much do we detract from the Grace of God in Christ. Hence the Apostle, *Rom. 5.* when he maketh that famous Opposition between the First *Adam* and the Second, the Gift of Grace by the one, and the Condemnation by the other, pitcheth upon that first Disobedience, by which we are made Sinners, as the Original of all that Calamity we are plunged into. It is the true knowledge of this only, that will make us see the necessity of Christ in every Duty; and as none speak so much of Grace and Christ as *Paul*, so none speaks so fully and largely about Original Sin. In the 5th of the *Romans*, he asserts the Doctrine of it, and in the 7th, he declares the Power of it, which he felt in himself, tho' regenerated. Let none then think this a Philosophical Dispute, and that erring in this is like erring in those Points wherein one Christian should bear with another; but with *Augustin*, account it a Fundamental, and that to deny it is to overthrow that Law whereby we are Christians.

CASE II.

How we may be convinced of our Original Sin.

Tho what follows may clearly prove the existence of Original Sin, yet I shall briefly here set down these Three Arguments to evince it.

1. **WE** may be sensible of it by our horrible Ignorance of God and the things of Salvation.

We find our selves all by Nature grossly ignorant of God, according to that of the Apostle, *Rom. 3. 11. There is none that understandeth or seeketh after God; no not one.* And this gross Ignorance can proceed from nothing else but that Original Corruption which hath blinded the Eyes of our Understanding, so that we can discern nothing that is spiritual till our Minds are enlightened from above.

2. By our great aversion to God and his Holy Law, which we find in our selves while in an unconverted State; we are naturally, as the Apostle says, Enemies to God, and are haters of him and his Image, and can endure any thing rather than him. Hence it is that the *Jews of Old*, as mention'd by the Prophet *Isaiab*, complained of the Publick Duties as tedious and wearisom to them: And even the most sincere Christians in the World, will, upon observation, find more or less of this upon them, even where there is a desire after spiritual Duties; and hence our Blessed Saviour told his Disciples, *The Spirit indeed is willing, but the Flesh is weak.*

3. By our proneness after every thing that is evil; it

is become natural to us, and we can take pleasure in nothing else; and tho God prohibit it under so severe Penalties, yet such is our insatiable Desire after it, that we will notwithstanding venture upon it. And hence the Scripture so often inculcates, that the Imaginations of Mans Heart are continually evil. And the Apostle in the 8th of the Romans, saith, That we are sold under Sin, wholly under the Power and Dominion of it, wholly addicted to its Interest; so that we would not have that impure Spirit cast out of us; we love not to be washed and cleansed from our Filthiness, but such is our swinish Nature, that we take pleasure in plunging ourselves more and more in that puddle of Sin. This must needs convince us, that there is an Evil in our Natures, derived down to us from that Guilt of our First Parents: For it can never be supposed that wickedness could be so universal, and in such a heighth in the World, if there were nothing else to advance it but mere ill Examples and the Temptations of Satan.

C A S E III.

What are the Effects of Original Sin on our Minds?

1. **T** *Here is not only horrible Ignorance in the Soul caused by it, but also Error and positive Mistakes; our condition were not altogether so bad, if our Minds were only in a not knowing or meer privative Ignorance about God; but Oh! the gross and absurd Persuasions that Men have naturally about God: It is from the Error in Mans Minds, that*

that Polytheism, or multiplicity of Gods has so abounded in the World; yea, the Idolatry that has filled the Heathen World, and under subtile Distinctions has invaded the Christian Church also, doth abundantly proclaim Original Ignorance and Error in us about Divine Things.

2. *Original Sin incapacitates every Mans Understanding to Holy Things*; so that divine and supernatural Things are no more received by him than a Beast can apprehend Reason. This is fully affirmed by the Apostle, 1 Cor. 2. 14. *The natural Man receiveth not the things of God, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.*

3. *It fills our Minds with Vanity*; 1 Cor 3. 20. *The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the Wise that they are vain.* This Vanity of our Minds is visible, in that the Understanding of Man is more affected with pleasing Things, than with solid and sound Truths; is more affected with Words, Language, Jest, &c. than with that Matter which tends to spiritual Edification. Whence arises that Delight in embroidered Language, in Plays, and Comedies, and Romances, but from a Vanity on Mans Mind? Why is a Man pleased with these rather than a Sermon, but because his Mind is vain?

4. *It makes a Man prone to deceive himself*; so that Sin is presented as sweet and profitable, and good to be embraced, holy things as difficult and irksom. This self deceiving Sin is especially seen in the judging our selves good and right, when indeed we are abominable and loathing to God; and hence it is that every Mans ways are clean in his own Eyes, and every one is in love with himself, and ready with the Pharisee to justify himself.

5. *It doth greatly defile the Mind of Man in the mutability and instability of it*; the Judgment of every natural Man, is like a Reed shaken with every Wind; he is mutable and unconstant, ready every day or every year to have a new Faith, and a new Religion. Therefore the Apostle informs us, that one end of the Ministry is, *Eph. 4. 14. That we be not carried about with every wind of Doctrin*; we are so wavering and unstable, that we are presently seduced to any new Opinion; and therefore the Scripture doth press a *sound Mind*, and an Heart established with Grace, which is the special Preservative against such Instability.

6. *It filletb the Mind of Man with Pride and vain Glory.* The Apostle saith of some, *Vainly puffed up with a fleshly Mind*, Col 2. 18. This Tympany of the Mind hath been the cause of most Heresies in the Church. This Pride and Self-conceit is a Worm bred in the Rose, and the more Parts Men have, the more it encreases. *Matthew Paris* reporteth, that a great Scholar, who in his Lectures proved the Divine Nature and Incarnation of Christ with great applause, did most arrogantly say, *That Christ was beholding to him for this Dispute*; that he owed as it were his Divine Nature to his Learning; upon which Blasphemy, he was forthwith struck with such Ignorance and Sottishness, that he was afterwards taught the Lords Prayer by a little Child. Many more of the sad Effects of Original Corruption might have been instanced in; but these may suffice.

C A S E IV.

How a Christian labouring under this natural Darknest of Mind, may be freed from it.

In order to this, I shall lay before you the following Particulars:

1. **E**ndeavour to fix a deep Impression of this Ignorance upon thy Soul. This will both keep thy Soul humble, and 'twill stir thee up to a diligent use of the Means for getting it removed, and make thee willing to listen to any Advice; whereas on the contrary, if a Soul is not sensible of its Ignorance, it is proud, and will not hearken to any Instruction. Till we are fully persuaded of this, we shall never seek to be freed from it: And we find often in the Scripture, that the Servants of God were deeply sensible of their Ignorance, and made confession thereof to God, *Job 40. 3. Who is he that hideth Wisdom without Knowledge? therefore have I uttered that I understood not, things too wonderful for me, &c. v. 6. Wherefore I abhor my self. Psal. 73. 22. So foolish was I and ignorant; I was as a Beast before thee. And in that solemn Confession of the Church, Isa. 59. 10. We grope for the Wall like the blind, and we grope as if we had no Eyes; we stumble at Noon-day, as in the Night, &c.*

2. Be much in earnest Prayer and fervent Supplication with God, that he who commanded the Light, to shine out of Darknest, may shine in your Hearts, to give the Light of the Knowledge of the Glory of God in the Face of Jesus Christ: That he who for this End came into the World,

World that the blind might see, would graciously be pleased to open the Eyes of your Understanding, to take off the Scales of Ignorance therefrom, that ye may discern the great and glorious Mystery of the Gospel of God. If you go about this in singleness of Heart and intenseness of Mind, you may be assured, that you shall obtain your Request of him who giveth liberally unto all, and upbraideth none.

3. *Be much in reading the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto Salvation, through Faith which is in Jesus Christ.* Meditate frequently thereon, and you will find it a Sovereign means of dispelling your natural Darknes, and of filling your Souls with Divine Light; David found it so, *Psal. 119. 7, 8. The Law of the Lord is perfect, converting the Soul; the Testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The Commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightning the Eyes.* *Psal. 119. 98, 99. Thou through thy Commandments hast made me wiser than my Enemies; for they are ever with me. I have more Understanding than all my Teachers, because thy Precepts are my Meditation.*

4. *Be frequent in hearing the Word preached;* for as Faith so Knowledge comes by hearing; and let it be thy great endeavour always to improve thy Understanding by every Sermon thou hearest; and what thou gettest, labour to cherish and encrease it by constant Meditation thereon.

5. *Have a special care to keep thyself from Sin:* Look upon it as that which among other Evils, has brought that of Darknes and Ignorance into the World. And therefore as you would encrease in Knowledge, have no Fellowship with the unfruit-
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ful Works of Darkneſs; for if you do, inſtead of knowing more, you ſhall plunge your ſelves into further Darkneſs: For Sin when entertained, weakens the whole Powers of the Soul, becomes the ſtrong Man that takes poſſeſſion of the Houſe, and regulates all there according to the Dictates of its Maſter, the Prince of the Power of Darkneſs; and ſo hinders you from coming to the Light, leſt its Deeds ſhould be made manifeſt.

C A S E V.

What are the Effects of Original Sin upon the Conſcience?

CONſcience by Original Sin is polluted and depraved, ſo that it cannot perform thoſe great Duties to Man for which it was ordained.

For, I. If we conſider its Applying Office,

1. *It doth not make particular Application of Sin as it ought, the Soul having only a general Knowledge of ſuch Things to be Sins*; and if it may be any ways called particular, it is only ſpeculative, and which has no Influence upon the Soul, nor makes any particular Application, ſuppoſe at commiſſion of a Sin, or after, at hearing a Sermon; ſo that Miniſters may juſtly take up the Complaint of the Prophet, *None ſaid, What have I done?* Therefore till the Grace of God quickens the Conſcience, making thee cry out, *What have I done?* I have ſinned; all thy Knowledge in the general, all the Texts of Scripture in thy memory, have no Influence at all.

2. *Or if it do ſeem to make any particular Application,*
yet

yet it is so faint, that it hath no Power over the Affections and Will of a Man: So that they like Amnon to Tamar are too strong, and commit a Rape upon her. Is not this the sad condition of many, whose Consciences condemn them daily? Thou art such a Sinner, thy ways are damnable, but they slight and despise these Applications of Conscience, as rude Scholars the Authority of their Master: Like Balaam they will press forward in their Sin, tho Conscience like an Angel with a Sword in his Hand, stand in the way.

3. *Tho it do apply, yet it is but seldom, and not constantly nor daily.* The Cock crew once or twice before Peter remembred himself; Conscience may apply once or twice, yet the noise of Lusts drowns its voice. Therefore unless it speak frequently, as the Prophet did three times to the dead Child, there will be no suitable Effects.

II. *As it fails in its Duty of Applying, so likewise in bearing witness to our Actions.* It is an old saying, *Conscience is a thousand Witnesses*; yet how little of this is to be seen, while Men make no scruple to commit those wickednesses in the presence of God and Conscience, which they would be afraid and ashamed to do in the Eyes of the World; so provided they can accomplish their Wickednesses without the observation of Men, they value not the Witness that Conscience and God can bear against them. This manifestly declares the pollution of Conscience by Original Sin. O then, be afraid; for tho Conscience be now silent, it will one day, if not in time awakened, be a gnawing Worm in thee that will never die.

III. *If we consider its Office of Accusing and Excusing,*

sing, we shall likewise find it greatly deficient in this Point. For in the Office of Accusing, is it not wholly silent? Do not many Men run into the Excess of Riot, without the least remorse; embrace any Wickedness suggested without the least check? How busie is the Devil in this Point, to make thy Conscience dumb? Conscience is by *Bernard* called the *Souls Looking-glass*, by beholding it when in its Vigour, thou mayst see thy Sins, thy Duties, what is to be repented of, what to be reformed, according as our Looking-glasses represent our bodily Spots: But alas! till it is renewed, it doth nothing aright; it lets a Man go on without the least remorse, without the least accusation; as we find in that instance of *Joseph's Brethren*, who after they had first designed to murder him, and afterwards sold him, yet they were no more troubled than if no Evil had been committed. And as for its Excusing, how evil is it in this Point? Did not Conscience excuse the *Jews* of Old, notwithstanding all the VVickedness they had done? And how ready was the Conscience of that Pharisee to flatter him, so that he could vainly say, *God, I thank thee that I am not like this Publican; I am no Swearer, Drunkard, &c.* And how many Souls do's Conscience thus inevitably ruine?

IV. *Another Office it hath in the Soul, is that of Judging.* There should be a Tribunal erected in every Mans Heart, where Conscience is to sit as Judge; and this Court of Conscience should be daily kept; which is the same as when, *Psal. 4.* we are commanded to commune with our own Hearts, and be still; to search and try our Ways; or, *1 Cor. 11.* To judge our selves that we be not judged. This is a great Duty,
which

which is even commended by Heathens themselves; *Know thy self, and dwell with thy self.* But who is there that thus keeps a daily Court in himself? How few call their Actions, their Thoughts to the Bar, to give Judgment against them? As for Actions, tho many of them may be condemned by the Light of Nature, yet how few do really condemn themselves for the evil of them? And if so few as to external Acts, much fewer yet as to the Thoughts and Frame of the Heart: How much heavenly Skill and Prudence is required before one can judge aright? Had the Hypocrite judged himself, had the Pharisaical Man rightly judged himself, what a mighty change would you quickly see on those who now bless themselves in their good Condition? O Let us therefore groan under the weight of Original Sin in all these respects: Let us say with the Psalmist, *Who can understand his Errors? cleanse me from secret Faults; keep back also thy Servant from presumptuous sin, and let it not have dominion over me, &c.* Psal. 19. 12, 13.

CASE VI.

How one may distinguish a good from a polluted Conscience.

Take these following Signs briefly to distinguish them.

1. **I**F thou hast a faithful Conscience, whatever thou dost will be done for Conscience sake; but if not, for some other sinister Design. The Apostle, Rom. 13. 5. pressing Obedience to Magistrates, urgeth it, *Not only for fear, but for Conscience sake.* Now those whose Consciences are not regenerated, will never do

do it upon this account, as it is Gods Ordinance, but only out of fear, because by doing otherwise, they should incur the Penalties inflicted on Offenders: So likewise in case of Charity, the one extends his Charity meerly in obedience to Gods Commands, as he is obliged to love his Neighbour as himself, and supply all his Necessities; the other only to be seen of Men, or possibly thinking that thereby he shall merit something at the Hand of God, as too too many have done. Thus there are many wicked Men would run into all Excess of Riot, but they dare not, for fear of prejudicing their secular Interest; they have a hearty desire to do it, but because they may be made to suffer by it, therefore they are against it; whereas, those that have a good Conscience are not kept from it by any such base Motive, but purely out of Love to God, and in Obedience to his Command.

2. *A good Conscience has a complete and full Conviction, but a polluted only a partial.* Our Saviour charged this partial Conscience on the Pharisees, Luke 11.4. *They tithed Mint and Rue, but the things of Mercy and Judgment they neglected.* The chief Priests also were afraid of defiling themselves by entering into the common Hall, and yet had no scruple about shedding the innocent Blood of our Lord. And what's more ordinary than this? May we not observe Men very zealous for needless or superstitious Ceremonies, as the *Athenians* were about their *Di-ana*, and yet for gross Profanity, they are never moved at that; they have no Zeal for Gods Glory, tho Iniquity abound in every place: But a good Conscience will be sure to be set against every Sin. Therefore if thy Conscience set thee to pray, read,

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meditate,

meditate, and yet suffer thee to remain unjust, &c. assure thy self it is a polluted Conscience; otherwise the same which put thee upon the one, would likewise move thee to the other.

3. *A faithful Conscience is most severe against its own Sins, and meddles not much with other Mens; whereas, a polluted Conscience seeth little or nothing in it self, but aggravates the Sins of others.* Such a corrupt Conscience Christ charges the Pharisees with, *Mat. 7. Thou Hypocrite, thou canst discern the Mote that is in thy Brothers Eye, but canst not see the Beam that is in thy own Eye, &c.* The Apostle also begins the 2. Chap. to the Romans, *Therefore thou art unexcusable, O Man, who judgest others, and dost the same things thy self.* But the godly Mans Conscience is of another strain, it will say with Paul, *I am the greatest of Sinners; I see those Sins in my self which the World doth not; none can judge and condemn me more than I can my self.*

4. *A defiled Conscience gives a great deal of ease and security; whereas an upright Conscience will do its Duty, and let thee have no rest day nor night upon commission of the least Sin.* A good Conscience is like the Eye in the Body, very tender, the least Mote coming into it causes a great deal of Pain or Trouble; or like any part that is most tender and of exquisite Sense; whereas an unfaithful Conscience is like any part of the Body that is Paralytick, it has no sense or feeling, it is as it were seared; so that it must be some extraordinary Sin or Judgment that will awaken it.

We shall here likewise subjoin some Marks to distinguish a Regenerated from a meerly troubled Conscience.

1. **A** *Troubled Conscience has servile slavish Fears accompanying it; whereas the Regenerate Conscience*

ence has a godly filial Fear. The former in Rom. 8. is called a *Spirit of Bondage*, and has with it a fearful looking for of Judgment, being only troubled for the Punishment it has made it self subject to, and which it fears will be inflicted upon it for commission of the Sins: The latter is called a *Spirit of Adoption*, and it's Trouble is mainly that it has offended a Gracious Father. And hence,

2. *A Troubled Conscience drives one further from God; whereas a Regenerate Conscience drives the Sinner to God.* The former heightens the Trouble and encreases the Flame; and as formerly it led to Presumption, that God was ready to pardon, now it useth contrary Engines, provoketh to Despair, represents God as severe, and one who will never forgive such Transgressions: The latter, tho it know it has grievously provoked God, yet it do's never despair of his Mercy; nay, on the contrary it sees it must of necessity have its pardon, knowing that otherwise it must certainly be damned; and therefore is resolved to wait patiently upon him in his own way.

3. *The Troubled Conscience is ready to use false Remedies for its cure, whereas the Regenerate Conscience will only use such as are prescribed by Gods Word.* Thus the troubled Conscience has its recourse either to carnal or sinful ways of Pleasure, to remove their troubles, or to superstitious and uncommanded ways of Devotion, thinking thereby to be healed. The former too many take, who when troubled for sin they call it Melancholy, and so will away again to their merry Company to divert it; and thus they stifle the very first Risings of Conscience in them. Others when none of these means will rebuke their Storms, be-

take themselves to some superstitious, austere ways, by inflicting upon themselves some bodily Affliction, Penance or Pilgrimage; and by these means think to get Peace of Conscience: But *Luther* found the contrary, and said, *That all their Casuists were unwise Physitians, and that they gave Gall to drink instead of Honey.* But the regenerate Conscience abhorreth both these ways: For as it knows in the first place, that it can never have true Peace till Sin is thoroughly repented for and God reconciled, so it knows that none of those austere Punishments can have any influence to procure Gods Favour; and therefore it patiently waiteth upon him in the way he has appointed, till he graciously please to speak Peace to it.

C A S E VII.

How to attain a sanctified Conscience.

1. **P**Ray fervently to God that your Consciences may be sanctified; that they may prove faithful Monitors to you in every thing, that they may continually shew you what is that good and acceptable way, that ye may walk in it constantly.

2. *Act Faith in Christ*; make Application to his Blood, which hath sufficient Virtue to purifie your Consciences, *Heb. 9. 14.* *How much more shall the Blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without Spot to God, purge your Consciences from dead Works, to serve the living God.*

3. *Have a special care that you never slight the Checks of your Consciences, for the commission of any Sin or omission of any Duty.* Tho Conscience hath lost a great deal of its Power, yet in the most profane it has
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at some time or other some stirrings; when therefore thou findest such in thee, cherish them, quench them not; and if you prove faithful in those small Measures which you have, you need not doubt but God will afford you greater: For he hath said, That *he will not break the bruised Reed, nor quench the smoking Flax.*

C A S E VIII.

Of the bad Effects of Original Sin upon the Memory.

THE Memory is the repository of the Soul wherein all its Knowledge is laid up, that we may be at all times furnished thence on every occasion. But that as well as the other Faculties, is in a manner quite destroyed by the Fall. For,

1. *Every one may naturally find the dulness, sluggishness and stupidity of it, to heavenly things.* This is so obvious as to all (at least in a natural State,) that we need not much insist upon it. For tho we can bring away a great deal with us of a vain frothy Discourse, or it may be of that which is meerly of human Learning, yet how ready are we to forget all, or most we hear of a spiritual Discourse?

2. *That what it doth remember of spiritual Things is so faint that it produces no suitable Operations.* The end of remembring what is Good is to love it, practice it, imitate it; and of Evil to loath it, repent of it and flee from it. Now herein is our Memory polluted that it never obtains its blessed End, and so is as if we had none at all.

3. *That we cannot remember when we would, and when it doth most concern us;* whereas it was otherwise with Adam in his State of Innocency. How many

many poor Souls do we meet with coming from a Sermon, complaining that they heard things very profitable for them, but they had quite forgot the most advantageous Truths?

4. *Nay, how often do's it bring things into our Minds which at that time are hurtful to us? As when we are in holy Duties, how often do's it suggest carnal and worldly Thoughts into us? So that, as Job 1. when the Sons of God come and appear before him, then comes Satan in their Memories and withstands them.*

C A S E IX.

What are the means to obtain sanctified Memories?

1. **I**F you would have sanctified Memories, Bewail the pollution of your Memories, and pray heartily to the Father that he may be pleased to send you the Holy Ghost, to teach you in all things, and to bring all things to your remembrance, Luke 11. 13. And that not only in your solemn Prayers, but also in reading and hearing, you should with David say, O Lord keep this for ever in the Imagination of the Thoughts of my Heart.

2. *Labour to be very attentive in hearing or reading.* If your Minds wander therein, your Memory must needs forget it. Confine therefore your Thoughts to the holy Work you are about, and fetch in your stragling Fancies with a hearty Sigh. Remember that Almighty God speaks to you by every Sermon or good Book that you hear or read, and therefore that you should hear or read it with all attention.

3. *Highly esteem the Word of God whether written or preach'd.* The more we love and admire any thing the better we remember it: For then the Affections

ons work upon the Spirits, which are the Instruments of the Memory, and so fix things upon it. Excellent to this purpose is that saying, *That the best Art of Memory is to be humbled at Gods Threatnings, and comforted at his Promises: For Great Grievs and Joys leave great Impressions on us.*

4. *Seriously meditate upon it.* When People immediately after reading and hearing plunge themselves into other Business, then they lose all, *Jam. 1. 24, 25.* For he beholdeth and goeth his way, and straightway forgets what manner of Man he was. But who so looketh and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this Man shall be blessed in his end. Thus it is in other things, if you have received any Injury, and think not more of it, it leaves but small Impression; but if you reflect upon it and aggravate it, then it's long ere you can forget it. And so it would be in good things, would Men but bestow some second Thoughts upon them.

CASE X.

Of the Depravation of the Will by Original Sin.

1. **T**He Will is corrupted in its error and mistake about its Object, it shooteth at a wrong mark. It is really evil that it intendeth, tho under the notion of good. And so the Scripture speaketh constantly of wicked Men, as those that love evil, and will evil and hate good, because it is evil which their Wills desire, tho it hath the outward bait and colour of what is good.

2. *When it doth any holy and spiritual Duties, the true motive and proper reason of their intention is not regarded, but false and carnal ones.* The Pharisees were very constant in Prayers, and busie in giving Alms; but their intention was to be seen of Men. And tho all are not so grossly hypocritical, yet most upon examination will find their ends to have been no higher in spiritual Duties, than to obtain some temporal Blessings, or to avert some Judgments.

3. *It will many times add to the Worship of God, and accumulate Precepts and Means of Grace in his Service, and all this while think a good Intention will bear it out.* If you ask why

why the Church has not always been contented with the simplicity of the Gospel? You will find this corrupt intention of the Will to have been the cause of it. A good Intention brought in most of the superstitious and uninstituted Ceremonies that have ever been in the several Ages of the Church, Mat. 15. 9. *In vain do you worship me, teaching for Doctrins the commandments of Men.* The Pharisees thought by their Commands and Doctrins, to teach Men the fear and worship of God. This corrupt Intention hath eaten out the very life and power of Godliness; Men taking upon them a more excellent stay (as they think) than the Scripture has revealed, to teach Reverence & Devotion.

4. *The Will chuseth such things as are pleasing to Flesh and Blood, tho there be never so many Snares in them to endanger the Soul.* Thus it was with Lot, he chose to dwell in the Plains of Jordan, Gen. 13. 10, 11. And you know what come of it.

CASE XI.

How one may attain a sanctified Will?

1. **R**esign your Wills with the Whole Faculties of your Soul into the Hand of God: Betake your selves to him as one that is both able and willing to help you, that he may give you a clean Heart, and renew a right Spirit within you, Pl. 51.

2. Be much exercising that great Duty enjoyned by our blessed Saviour for this Effect: Watch and Pray that you enter not into Temptation; because, as our Lord subjoins, *tho the Spirit be willing yet the Flesh is weak.*

3. Be frequently meditating on the danger and destructiveness of Sin, that thou mayst thereby be kept from the actual Commission thereof. The greatest Sensualist were there never so pleasant a Liquor presented to him, and were he at the same time told that there was Poyson in it, which would instantly kill him, would not, how strong soever his Desire be after it, dare to drink it up. And had we real apprehensions of the evil and danger of Sins, how they would undoubtedly ruin us to all eternity, it cannot be supposed that the seeming Pleasures thereof would so easily entice us as they do.

FINIS.